



## **Tour Guide Book**

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**Tour of Wickliffe Mounds Museum**

**Archaeology Tour of the Excavations**

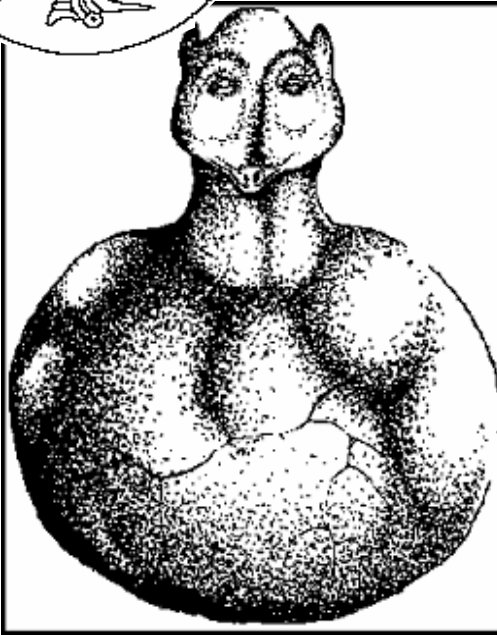
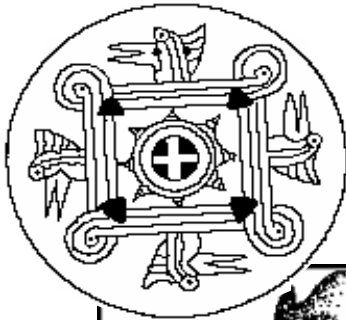
**Woodswalk Trail Guide**





# Wickliffe Mounds

## State Historic Site



### General Information

**Wickliffe Mounds State Historic Site**  
PO Box 155 / 94 Green Street  
Wickliffe, Ballard County, Kentucky  
Highway 51/60/62  
**270-335-3681**  
[www.parks.ky.gov](http://www.parks.ky.gov)

### Hours:

**9:00 to 4:30**

*Park Gates Close at 4:30*

**Wickliffe Mounds Admission Fees:**  
Adults \$5 and Kids age 6-12 \$4  
Kids age 5 and under are \$1  
Group Rates  
available by advance appointment

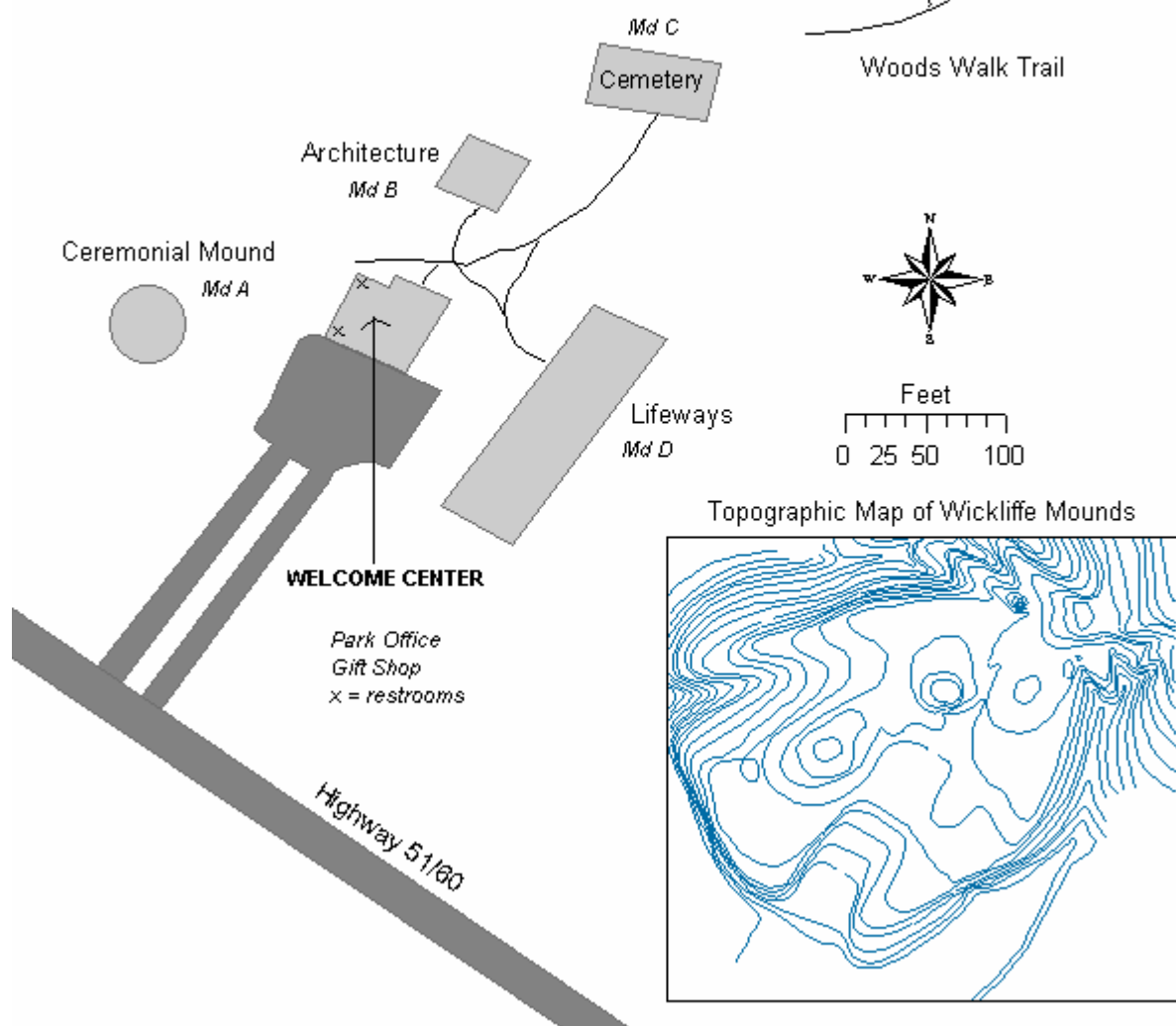
Picking up artifacts is NOT  
ALLOWED. Site is protected  
by State and Federal Laws.  
Violators will be turned in to  
local law enforcement agencies.

### **Please remember:**

Food items, beverages, smoking,  
pets, and photography  
**are prohibited in the museum.**  
Food and Drink only  
allowed in Welcome Center.  
Thank you for your cooperation.

# Wickliffe Mounds State Historic Site

*Archaeological Site 15BA4*



## **Wickliffe Mounds State Historic Site**

Welcome to Wickliffe Mounds State Historic Site. Nearly 1,000 years ago, Native Americans of the Mississippian culture built a small village here on the bluffs of the Mississippi River. Peaceful farmers, they grew corn and squash, hunted in the neighboring forests, fished the river and built the earthen mounds you see here today. For reasons unknown, they abandoned the village around 1350 A.D. Wickliffe Mounds was one of many Mississippian towns built along the river and was a residential and ceremonial center.

We hope you enjoy your tour of this important archaeological site. A complete tour of the park includes four mounds (Mound D, the Lifeways building; Mound C, the Cemetery building; Mound B, the Architecture building; and Mound A, the Ceremonial Mound), an Excavation Tour and a Woods Walk Trail. We hope you will have time to tour all areas. The exhibit buildings cover mounds that were excavated in the 1930's by Fain King, an amateur archaeologist and businessman who first developed the site as a tourist attraction. Each building has exhibits that explain about the excavation there, and archaeological interpretations.

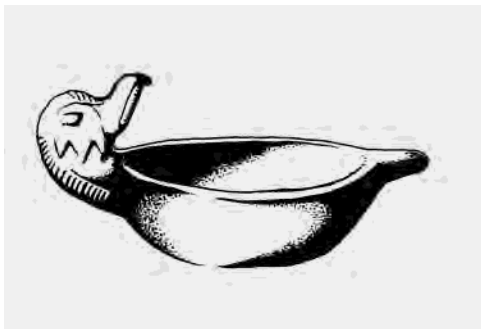
**The Lifeways Building** Approximately 900 years ago Wickliffe Mounds was a moderately sized Mississippian village. The area now covered by the Lifeways building was once the site of villagers' homes. These homes were part of the early village, which was clustered tightly around a central plaza. When excavations began here in the 1930s, there was a low, elongated mound here. The mound (Mound D) was built over the sites where the early houses had been. Excavations have removed almost all of Mound D. The artifacts and features you see on the floor are from the early period when this area was still village. These artifacts include pottery for storage and cooking, grinding stones, posthole patterns and animal remains. The sites of infant burials are marked with small signs, although the human remains have been removed from exhibit.

**Note: Mounds were given the names A-B-C-D by Fain King, in the order they were excavated.**

**The Cemetery Building** To an archaeologist, burials are a tremendous source of information on both the cultural and the physical aspects of a people. Burials yield information such as infant mortality rates, life expectancy and the differences in mortality between men and women. Burials also provide evidence of diseases such as arthritis and tuberculosis, and of patterns of injury and diet. The human remains have been removed from display for study and reburial. Ten burials have been replicated in plastic, copying as closely as possible their original positions. A brief audio program presents the views of several Native American consultants about burials. The mound here (Mound C) was built in stages and has a very complicated stratigraphy. The burials are dated to the 1200's.

**The Architecture Building** The two platform mounds at Wickliffe Mounds were built in successive stages over a period of about 200 years. A cross-section of either mound would reveal a structure much like that of a layer cake. Excavations in the mound where the Architecture Building now stands (Mound B) have shown that a family lived on top of this mound. This appears to be the only residential mound on this site, and probably was the home of a chief's family. The excavations through the center of Mound B have exposed the posthole pattern of the original building on this spot, possibly the first chief's house. A corner of the house has been reconstructed to show the wattle-and-daub construction technique. The walls have been painted to show the layers in the mound as they were recorded in the 1930s.

**The Ceremonial Mound** This is the largest mound on the site (Mound A) and was built to elevate the main ceremonial building. Excavations in the 1930s removed the center of this mound, much like in the Architecture Building, but the excavation had to be filled in to stabilize the mound. The mound was built in at least six stages. From excavations in 1932 and 1984-1985, Wickliffe Mounds archaeologists do not believe that a family ever lived on this mound. The building on top of Mound A probably served as the center of economic, political, and religious activity.



## **The Archaeology of Wickliffe Mounds**

Early settlers in and around Wickliffe probably knew about the mounds, but the first published notice occurred in 1888, when Robert Loughridge mapped the site for the Kentucky Geological Survey. In 1932, road crews building Highway 51/60/62 cut through the south end of the site, and uncovered pottery and other artifacts.

Colonel Fain King, a Paducah businessman, bought the site so that he could conduct excavations and create a tourist attraction. Joined by his wife, Blanche Busey King, he directed excavations and oversaw the site from 1932 until 1946. Some of their excavations followed proper archaeological techniques, but their field notes and other records have disappeared. Mrs. King published a book called Under Your Feet in 1939 which contained some information and photos about their involvement at the site. In 1946, the Kings retired, and turned the site over to Western Baptist Hospital in Paducah. The hospital managed the site as a tourist attraction known as the Ancient Buried City.

In 1983, Western Baptist Hospital donated the site to Murray State University. The Wickliffe Mounds Research Center was established to study, interpret and preserve the site with archaeologists and museum personnel in charge.

From 1984 through 2004, Murray State University sponsored excavations to promote a better understanding of the site. One of the problems that archaeologists face at Wickliffe Mounds is that field notes from the 1930's are missing. So, the results of modern research help archaeologists to understand the areas excavated by the Kings, and also other areas of the site occupied by the Mississippians.

Radiocarbon dates as well as other techniques have established a chronology: the Early Wickliffe period lasted from about A.D. 1100-1175, the Middle Wickliffe period from about A.D. 1175-1250, and the Late Wickliffe period from about A.D. 1250-1350.

The Wickliffe site began as a small village surrounding a central plaza (where the parking lot is now), about A.D. 1100. By about A.D. 1175, they built the first stage of what became Mound B (the Architecture building), where the chief and his or her family probably lived.

Between A.D. 1175 and 1250, the villagers built Mounds A (the Ceremonial Mound) and C (where the Cemetery building is), added to Mound B, and may have begun some other mounds such as Mound D (the Life-ways building). The area covered by the village expanded, partly as families moved back to give room for the mounds, and perhaps partly due to larger population. There are indications that trade increased during this period, especially between Wickliffe and the region around St. Louis, where Cahokia grew to be the largest Mississippian site.

Later, during the years A.D. 1250 and 1350, some interesting changes happened. The people devoted less effort to building mounds, although they completed Mounds A, B, and D during this period. Fishhooks all but disappeared from the archaeological record of this period, and fish became a much smaller part of the diet. The village continued to expand, however, until it covered the entire bluff.

The villagers apparently left this location about A.D. 1350. The reasons for their departure are not clear, and archaeologists are still studying the question. Archaeologists are now studying other Mississippian sites in western Kentucky to understand how the villages interacted and whether the people of other villages built mounds and abandoned their sites at the same time as the people at Wickliffe.

Wickliffe Mounds archaeologists are still studying the artifacts that were excavated. We are not currently conducting excavations. Since excavation destroys the part of the site being studied, modern archaeology justifies excavating only what will produce new information. Archaeological sites are a non-renewable resource. Until the most recent excavations are thoroughly studied, and new questions or techniques can be brought to the study of this site, or if mitigation projects become necessary, Wickliffe Mounds State Historic Site will continue to preserve the site and interpret the latest findings, but will avoid further excavations.

In 2004, Murray State University transferred the Wickliffe Mounds site and collections to the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Commerce Cabinet, Department of Parks. Wickliffe Mounds became Kentucky's 11<sup>th</sup> State Historic Site on July 1, 2004. The park and museum is now operated by Kentucky Department of Parks and open to the public as a state historic site.



## *Archaeology Walking Tour* **Wickliffe Mounds** State Historic Site



For more information, please contact:  
Wickliffe Mounds State Historic Site  
94 Green Street, PO Box 155  
Wickliffe KY 42087  
270-335-3681  
WickliffeMounds@ky.gov  
[WWW.PARKS.KY.GOV](http://WWW.PARKS.KY.GOV)



### An Archaeological Tour of Wickliffe Mounds

From 1984 to 2004, Murray State University archaeologist and students conducted excavations on the Wickliffe Mounds archaeological site. The project had several goals: primarily, to understand the excavations that were done in the 1930s, and to add new information by using modern methods to excavate in areas not yet studied.

The 16 numbered posts around the site are placed in areas that were excavated. Although the areas excavated were small, each year provided answers to some questions, and contributed to a better understanding of the village and how it changed through time. Hundreds of thousands of artifacts are still being analyzed and research will continue for several years. As we learn more from the artifacts, we will add new information to the exhibits and interpretive programming.

Preservation of the Wickliffe Mounds site is a long-term goal and the site is registered with the Kentucky Heritage Council, Kentucky Archaeological Survey and Office of the State Archaeologist. Wickliffe Mounds is on the National Register of Historic Places and a designated Kentucky Archaeological Landmark.

***Please be aware that picking up artifacts of any kind on the park is not permitted. Wickliffe Mounds is protected by state and federal laws.***

For more information about the archaeology of Wickliffe Mounds, please refer to the book, Excavations at Wickliffe Mounds by Dr. Kit W. Wesler (2000) University of Alabama Press.

As you walk to the numbered posts, please read the excavation information on the corresponding numbered sections. We hope you enjoy your tour of Wickliffe Mounds!



**Post 1 MOUND DESTROYED** A map of the Wickliffe site published in 1888 by R. Loughridge shows a small mound on the south end of the bluff. We call it Mound G. Test excavations in 1994 - 1996 looked for any archaeological deposits before the area was destroyed by construction in the 1930-50's. The village deposits and features (postholes and house basins), dating to A. D. 1200 – 1350, are still intact. There was no evidence of the mound, and its original function is unknown.

**Post 2 MOUND A EXCAVATIONS** Mound A is the largest mound on the site. The center was excavated in 1932, when several earlier mound stages were revealed. No records, and only a few artifacts, exist from that excavation. In 1984, a trench was excavated here, to find out more about the construction of the mound. The bottom layer is a village zone dating to circa A.D. 1100 – 1200. The mound was built in at least six stages between about A.D. 1200 and 1350. Because we have no records of the 1932 excavations, we do not know anything about the buildings on top of the mound stages. Excavations by Murray State University indicate that no one lived on the mound. The building on top of this mound was probably the largest and most important ceremonial structure in the village.

**Post 3 VILLAGE PLAN** Like most Mississippian villages, Wickliffe had a central plaza, where the villagers held ball games, ceremonies, and town meetings. Mounds stood on three sides of the plaza, and the village of small thatched houses, household gardens, and work areas surrounded the mounds. The plaza was where the Wickliffe Mounds parking lot and office building are today. You are standing on Mound A. Mound B, the second platform mound, is to your left (the Architecture Building). Mound D, a long, low mound, formed the east side of the plaza (where the Lifeways Building is today).

**Post 4 MOUND F EXCAVATIONS** Looking west of the ceremonial mound, this area originally was Mound F, which was excavated in the 1930's. We have some 25,000 artifacts (mostly pottery fragments) from the early excavation, but no records. Murray State University excavations in 1985 and 1986 studied the remnants of this mound. A few trash pits and postholes were left in the base of the old excavation, and a tiny remnant of the mound still exists in the northwest corner. The village expended into this area after A.D. 1250. Mound F covered the village deposits during the latest period of occupation. We do not know the function of this mound.

**Post 5 NORTHWEST VILLAGE EXCAVATIONS** The northwest section of the village was investigated in 1988 and 1989 in order to look for Mound E, excavated in the 1930's. Mound E is still missing, but we now know that this area was part of the village in the later period, A.D. 1250 – 1350. Wall trenches, small pits, and midden (village deposits) in this area are similar to those throughout the village.

**Post 6 HOUSE AND SUN CIRCLE** A 1989 test excavation here found the corner of a clay surface, which was thought to be a well-preserved house floor. Murray State University returned in 1994 to study the house. Parts of the house floor did survive, but much of it was cut up by later pits and house walls. The preserved floor was a hard, fired clay. Very few artifacts were found on the floor, suggesting that the house was abandoned before it burned down. The most surprising find was a painting of a Sun Circle preserved on the floor, next to a small fire pit. The Sun Circle (cross inside circle) is a widespread symbol in Mississippian and Native American art. Its meaning combines the four directions, the circle of the earth, and the sacred fire, and perhaps other symbolism.

**Post 7 MOUND B EXCAVATIONS** Mound B was excavated in 1932, revealing the posthole pattern in the floor inside the Architecture building. Very few artifacts were kept, but some drawings still exist, as shown inside. In 1990, Murray State University excavated a trench underneath this sign, to study the mound construction. Like Mound A, Mound B has a village layer at the base, dating between A.D. 1100 and 1200. The mound was constructed in at least four stages between A.D. 1200 and 1350. Mound B contained traces of a living midden on top of at least two early mound stages. Someone lived in the building on top of this mound. We assume that this was the residence of the chief's family, who "lived high" over the rest of the village. The chief's midden did not seem to be much different than the average family's, although he (or she) may have eaten better cuts of venison.

**Post 8 MOUND C EXCAVATIONS** Mound C was first excavated in 1932, revealing the cemetery. In 1989 and 1992 through 1994, new excavations revealed the full size and complexity of the deposits. Mound C was created around A.D. 1250, and may have been part of a complex of three small mounds. The burials in the cemetery date to the 1200s. Human burials that were found outside the Cemetery Building were recorded but left in place with minimal disturbance.

**Post 9 A COLLAPSED WALL** From 1992 to 1994 the Murray State University archaeologist and students attempted to trace the edges of the cemetery. This spot is outside the cemetery. Here, instead, was found a layer of daub, the burned clay of a house wall. There was no floor under the collapsed wall, and the house probably stood just south of this spot. The amount of daub found scattered around the village tells us that houses burned down very frequently. Early explorers' recorded that Native Americans deliberately burned down their houses every few years, to get rid of insects and lizards from the grass roofs.

**Post 10 HOUSE EXCAVATIONS** A house stood here about A.D. 1200 to 1250, before the cemetery and Mound C were built. Excavations in 1992 and 1994 studied the house. The house was outlined by wall trenches. No other house was built on top, so the wall trench pattern is unusually clear. Traces of a packed clay floor survived, and there was a very well-made hearth inside. Very few artifacts were found on the floor, indicating that the house was probably abandoned before the fire. Part of the house extends underneath the Cemetery Building, and the collapsed daub wall can still be seen inside, in the corner closest to this sign.

**Post 11 TRACES OF THE 1930s** Archaeologists find traces of all human activities that occurred on a site, from the time when people first arrived until the day before the excavation. Many of the Wickliffe Mounds excavations have been designed to understand what happened here in the 1930s. There is a thick gravel road under this sign. A 1932 photograph shows the road bed newly cut but not yet covered with gravel, which helps us date the road. Mississippian village deposits lie under the road. A few feet to the west, we found the stump of a large post. It matches the position of a pole for the circus tent that covered the cemetery excavation in 1932. Other 1932 photographs show that the archaeologists' camp and lab were a few feet east of here. No unmistakable traces of the camp have been found.

**Post 12 MISSISSIPPIAN HOUSES** Mississippian houses were usually rectangular and fairly small by modern standards, averaging about 10 x 13 feet. Walls were made by daubing clay and straw over a basket-like wattle structure. The roof was made of thatch. Common reed or bluestem make good thatching materials. A thatched roof swells in the rain, helping to create a waterproof covering. Excavations here have found only two house floors that were very well preserved, and neither was complete. Both houses were apparently abandoned before they were burned, and few artifacts were left behind. Therefore, we do not know exactly what the interior looked like. Partitions or benches, mats, cloths, skins, gourds, wooden implements, pottery, bone and stone items would have been useful furnishings as well as decorations. Both excavated houses had hearths for heat in the winter. European explorers recorded that Native Americans in the Southeast had paintings on the walls of buildings. Excavations here have recovered small pieces of daub with red and white paint on them, but no walls have survived to show us an intact painting.

**Post 13 MOUND D EXCAVATION** Mound D was excavated in the 1930s. We have many artifacts but very few records to help us understand this mound. In 1987, Murray State University excavated around the Lifeways Building to study Mound D. In this small remnant of the mound, we found an early living layer at the base, circa A.D. 1100 to 1200. Several pits and wall trenches, one of which contained a fine tobacco pipe, belong to the early village. One pit contained a large number of polished stone flakes, where a craftsman-farmer had sharpened several hoes. The mound was probably built between A.D. 1250 and 1350. A large pit, which was filled with trash, was dug into the mound top. The pit contained pieces of a fine human head pot, on display inside.

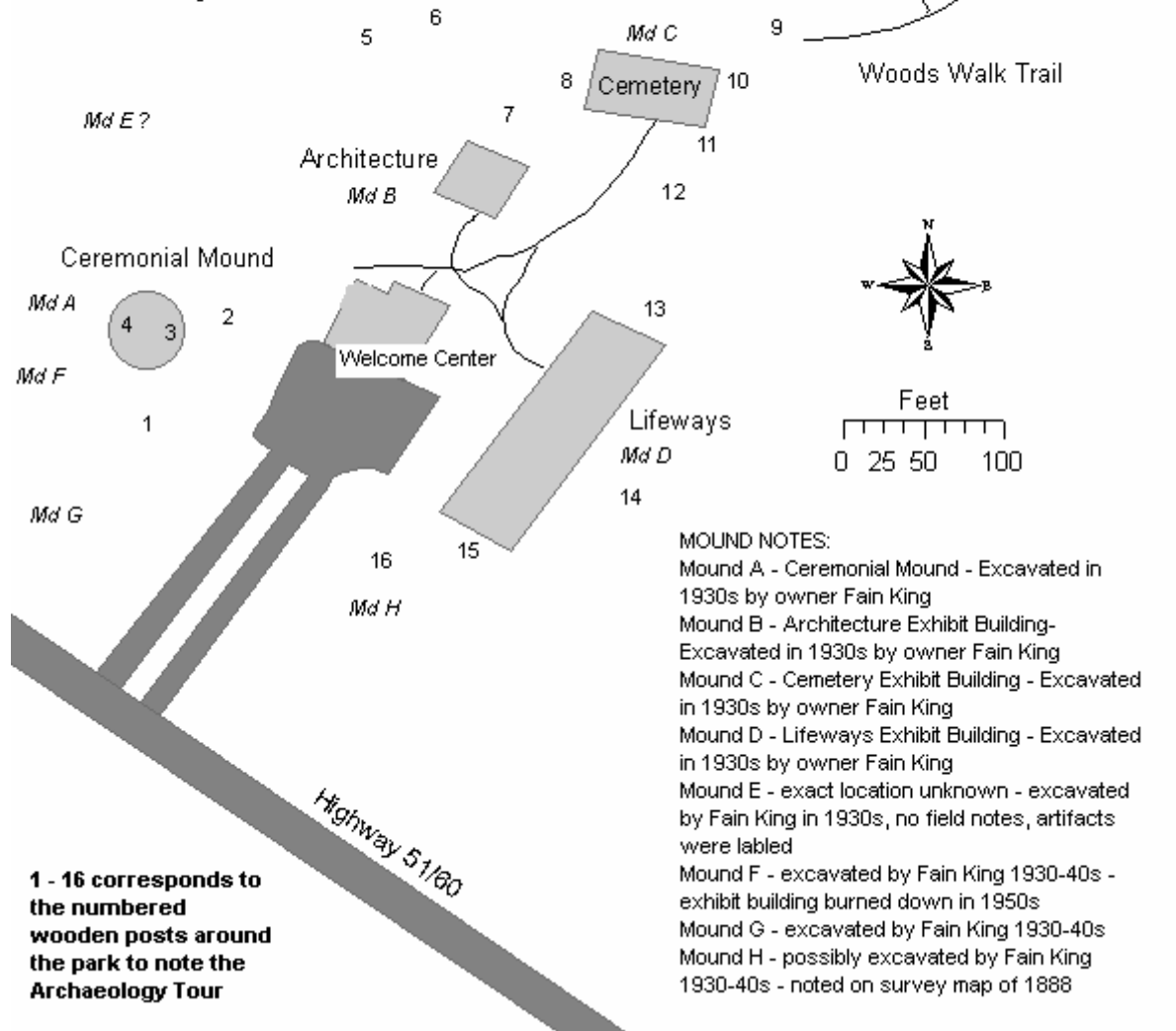
**Post 14 EAST MIDDEN** The low area behind the Lifeways Building reveals that the 1930s excavations were much wider than the building. The edge of the old excavation is where the ground rises up near the trees. The higher ground is undisturbed village deposits, and shows where the ground surface was in 1930. Excavations in 1983 by the University of Illinois, and Murray State University excavations in 1987, explored the village deposits. Trenches and pits from many houses created a very complicated record of life between A.D. 1250 and 1350. Several whole posts and an unusually fine astragalus die (on display in the Lifeways building) were among the artifacts found here.

**Post 15 EXPLORING THE VILLAGE** The Murray State University 1987 project continued here to see what was left after the 1930s excavations. We found that most of the soil here was disturbed, and that the 1930s excavation extended farther south than the Lifeways building. Underneath the refilled soil, we discovered pits and wall trenches that had not been excavated. Wall trenches from several houses crisscrossed each other, but no house floors remained intact. This part of the village was occupied between about A.D. 1200 to 1250, and may have been covered by the south end of Mound D.

**Post 16 LOOKING FOR MOUND H** A map of the Wickliffe site published in 1888 by R Loughridge shows a small mound at the south end of this ridge. We call it Mound H, and 1996 excavations attempted to find any evidence that it still exists. It was found that most of the ridge was covered with village deposits like any other part of the site. At the very end of the ridge, overlooking the modern parking lot, there is a mound, built between A.D. 1250 and 1350. Closer to the Lifeways building, the deeper village deposits and features (wall, trenches and postholes) show that the village expanded into this area by about A.D. 1200. The depression in the middle of the ridge top is a previously excavated area, possibly part of the King project in the 1930s.

# Wickliffe Mounds State Historic Site

## Archaeological Site 15BA4





**Wickliffe Mounds  
State Historic Site  
Woods Walk  
Trail**



**Contact Information:**

Wickliffe Mounds State Historic Site  
94 Green Street ▪ Wickliffe KY ▪ 42087

**270-335-3681**

[wickliffemounds@ky.gov](mailto:wickliffemounds@ky.gov)

[www.parks.ky.gov](http://www.parks.ky.gov)



## Welcome to the WoodsWalk Trail at Wickliffe Mounds State Historic Site!

### **Trail Information:**

The WoodsWalk Trail is a leisurely walk through the woods of Wickliffe Mounds. The designated trail is a 200 yard loop with 2 benches at each end of trail.

### **Trail Rules:**

The following activities are **prohibited** by state law and/or park regulations to preserve the park's natural and cultural resources.

- ⊕ Picking, collecting or harming plants
- ⊕ Hunting or disturbing wildlife
- ⊕ Carving or damaging rock formations
- ⊕ **No Collecting or Digging for Artifacts**
- ⊕ Camping or open fires
- ⊕ Getting off designated trails
- ⊕ Littering
- ⊕ No pets at Wickliffe Mounds

### **Hours:**

The WoodsWalk Trail is available during normal hours of operation for the museum and Welcome Center.

Thank You!



## **HERE ARE SOME PLANTS YOU MAY SPOT IN VARIOUS PLACES AROUND THE PARK**

### **Sweet Everlasting** (*Gnaphalium obtusifolium*)

Also called rabbit tobacco. A fragrant herb, flowers August-September. *Uses*: colds, chew for sore mouth, smoke for asthma, bug repellent.

### **Moneywort** (*Lysimachia nummularia*)

Primrose family. Yellow flowers July-August.

### **Mullein** (*Verbascum thapsus*)

*Uses*: leaves and flowers are medicinal, smoked to relieve lung congestion, coughs. Leaves can also be used to line footwear for warmth.

### **Compass Plant** (*Silphium laciniatum*)

Perennial, leaves face east and west, yellow flowers face east. *Uses*: general tonic and sedative, dried root for pain. Use ground compass plant in wounds to stop bleeding and kill infection.

### **Pale Indian Plantain** (*Cacalia atriplicifolia*)

*Uses*: leaves can be used as poultice for cuts, blisters and stings.

### **Bee Balm** (*Monarda didyma*)

Also called wild bergamot. *Uses*: leaf poultice for headache, use for colds, aromatic. Oil of plant used in perfumery. Attracts bees.

### **Butterfly Weed** (*Asclepias tuberosa*)

Milkweed family. Orange, orange-red, yellow flowers. Attracts bees and butterflies. *Uses*: fiber for twine, young shoots for greens, use for pleurisy, root tea for heart trouble, seeds for stomach ailments.

### **Sand Coreopsis** (*Coreopsis lanceolata*)

Tickseed. Drought-tolerant perennial native plant. *Uses*: makes a deep golden yellow dye.

### **Purple Cone Flowers** (*Echinacea purpurea*)

*Uses*: root used for many medicinal purposes, antitoxin, boosts the immune system.

### **Black Eyed Susan** (*Rudbeckia hirta*)

Daisy-like flower head, native plant. *Uses*: root used for earache, root tea for astringent, brown dye.

### **Goldenrod** (*Solidago odora*)

About 125 species of goldenrod. Blooms August-October. *Uses*: teas of root and leaves used medicinally for long list of complaints.

#### **References:**

- *Medicinal Plants of the Heartland* by Connie Kaye and Neil Billington
- *Wildflowers of Land Between the Lakes Region, Kentucky and Tennessee* by Edward Chester and William Ellis
- *A Handbook of Native American Herbs* by Alma Hutchens
- *Edible and Useful Wild Plants of the U.S. and Canada* by Charles Saunders
- *Cherokee Plants: Their Uses-A 400 Year History* by Paul Hamel and Mary Chiltoskey
- *Wildflowers and Ferns of Kentucky* by Mary Wharton and Roger Barbour
- *Weeds Golden Guide* by Alexander Martin

### **Woods Walk Trail**

These woods were once home to Native Americans of the Mississippian mound building culture. They lived in this village from about 1100 to 1350 A.D. They used all the resources from this woodland and riverine environment.

Woodlands were as important and familiar to the Mississippian people as the cornfields and town. Far from being "wilderness," the forest and the things it provided were gifts from Mother Earth. There was firewood for warmth and cooking, plants were used as medicine for many illnesses, wood and plants made materials for houses, tools, canoes, baskets, toys, and clothing. A variety of plants were gathered and animals were hunted for food. The animals, birds, and insects that people depended on could not live anywhere else. Important spiritual beings also belonged here.

These woods have not been burned or logged in decades. In the 1890s, a private landowner farmed the area around the mounds. The Wisconsin Chair Company owned the land from 1895 to 1932, and harvested the woods for lumber. In 1932, the site was developed by owner, Fain W. King, when the mounds were excavated and the museum was built. Since that time, the woods have grown up around the mound site.

Many of the plant species that you observe now would have been present when the Mississippian people lived at Wickliffe Mounds. Visitors can pause to read about just a few of the different kinds of plants that Native Americans used in this rich environment. Some of the plants described here are not in the immediate vicinity of the trail. Plants are seasonal, and can only be seen during certain times of the year. However, the plants described in the pamphlet are a natural part of the local woodland environment.

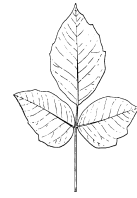
Although we can't list all the known uses of plants, here are some tidbits of information.

***Watch Out! Don't try these remedies at home!  
Don't pick or eat the plants, and be aware of  
poison ivy throughout the site. Information  
provided here is for interpretive purposes only.***



**Poison Ivy** (*Rhus radicans*)

Most people learn to avoid this three-leaved plant, which can appear as a hairy vine or as a shrub. Its juice usually causes a nasty rash, but some Native American shamans were said to know a secret way to handle it safely. They believed that all plants were allies with people against diseases, so even those that seemed unfriendly deserved respect.

**Mockernut Hickory** (*Carya tomentosa*)

Members of the hickory family were a very important resource. The nuts were high in protein, easily stored, and could be made into flour and cooking oil. They also attracted game animals. The sap could be boiled as a sweetener like maple syrup. Bows, canoe paddles, and other tools were made from the strong, bendable wood.

**Eastern Red Cedar** (*Juniperus virginiana*)

This evergreen was sacred to many Native American groups. Mississippian people sometimes buried red cedar with chiefs and other important people. The fragrant wood resists rotting, and the fibers of the inner bark can be spun into rope. Tea or smoke from the berries treated coughs and chest colds. Thinly split roots were woven into bags.

**Red or Slippery Elm** (*Ulmus rubra*)

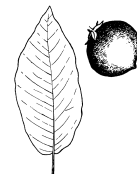
The inner bark of this tree was a source of thread for sewing and weaving. The fibers were peeled, boiled, pounded, and twisted by hand into yarn that is much like linen. Elm-bark tea is a good treatment for sore throats, and it was once thought to make childbirth easier. Young elm shoots and leaves are a favorite food of deer.

**Wild Black Cherry** (*Prunus serotina*)

The small, sweet fruit of this tree ripens in August or September. People find them tasty, and so do many types of birds that the Mississippian people hunted for food and feathers. Tea made from the bark was used as a sedative or cough remedy. Mashed roots, which contain traces of cyanide, were sometimes used as a disinfectant for skin ulcers.

**Persimmon** (*Diospyros virginiana*)

When the autumn weather turns cold, the fruit of this tree becomes ripe and sweet. Both the fruit and tea made from the leaves is high in Vitamin C, and would have been a nutritious addition to the diet. Persimmon pulp was separated from the skin and dried for future use. The roots were sometimes made into combs.

**Jewel Weed** (*Impatiens pallida*)

The juicy stem of this plant makes it easy to recognize. Its sap is an effective treatment for poison ivy, nettle stings, and other skin rashes. The leaves and young shoots, boiled in two changes of water, can be eaten like spinach.

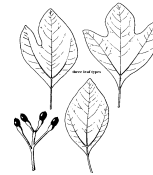


**Hackberry** (*Celtis occidentalis*)

Although very small, the berries of this tree are plentiful and sweet. While probably only a refreshing snack for humans, they are an important food for birds. The cambium, a thin layer between the bark and the wood, is also edible. During food shortages, the cambium from several kinds of trees could save lives.

**Sassafras** (*Sassafras albidum*)

The young leaves of this tree can be dried and ground into a powder for thickening stew. It is still a key ingredient in gumbo. Bark from the roots makes a sweet-tasting tea or yellow dye. Sassafras wood is strong, making it popular for house frames, bows, and fire-starting tools.

**Spicebush** (*Lindera benzoin*)

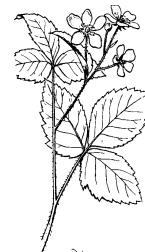
This shrub produces sweet smelling blossoms in the spring, and oily red berries in the fall. The leaves, twigs, and bark can be made into tea. Dried berries, which taste much like allspice, were used to flavor other foods. The nutritious berries also attract many kinds of birds.

**American Beech** (*Fagus grandifolia*)

The huge, grey, smooth-barked trees in this part of the woods are American beech. Their strong wood was made into corn grinders, platters, and containers because it did not give an unpleasant taste to the food. The bark could be peeled to roof houses or other shelters. Beech nuts, though not abundant, provided food for both people and animals.

**Blackberry** (*Rubus allegheniensis*)

This plant produces more than just delicious berries. Tea made from the leaves is both pleasant tasting and a remedy for diarrhea. Early spring shoots are good as a cooked green or salad. Sun-dried berries improved the flavor and nutrition of many dishes in winter. Birds and animals also depend on this source of food.

**Wild Grapes** (*Vitis cordifolia*)

Although smaller than domesticated grapes, wild grapes are just as tasty. They can be eaten raw, cooked, or dried into raisins. They were often used to flavor other foods. Tender young leaves could be eaten like spinach or as a salad. Boiling older leaves produced a blue dye. Woody old vines and roots, gathered in the fall, make sturdy baskets.

**Pokeweed** (*Pyrolaccca americana*)

The roots, stems and seeds of this plant are very poisonous. The young leaves and shoots, gathered before they show any red color, are a good source of vitamins and minerals. Poke greens and poke salad are still a popular sign of spring in this area. The berries make a purplish-blue dye.



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